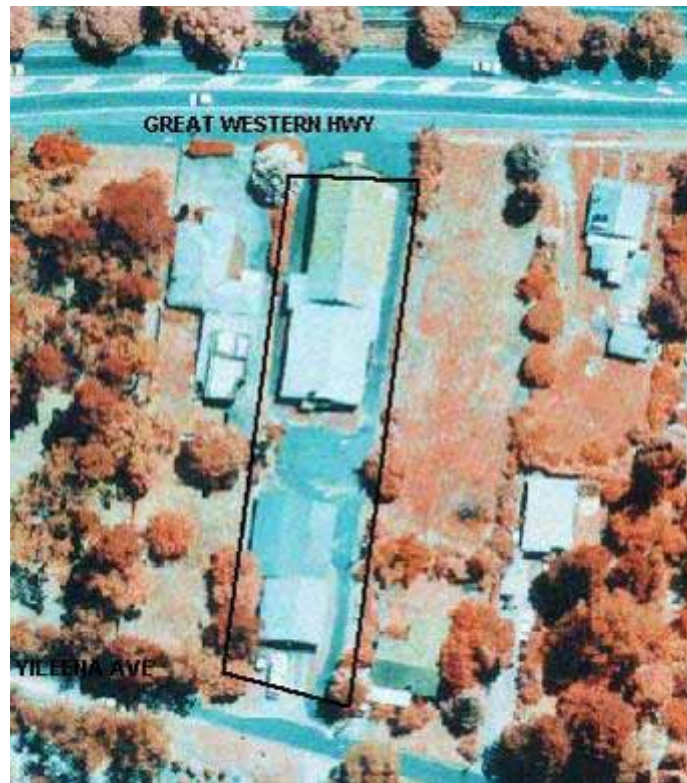


Draft Plan of Management for 284 Great Western Highway, Lawson (Including Lawson Community Hall and Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters)



Public Exhibition Draft May 2007

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CONTENTS

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY5**
- PART 1 INTRODUCTION6**
 - 1.1 About this Plan of Management..... 6
 - 1.2 Preparation of the Plan of Management 7
 - 1.3 Structure of the Plan of Management..... 8
 - 1.4 Consultation Undertaken in Preparation of this Plan 8
 - 1.4.1 *Lawson Community Hall Plan of Management Community Consultation Report, June 2004*..... 8
 - 1.4.2 *Lawson Community Hall & Rural Fire Service Plan of Management Public Hearing Report, October 2004*..... 9
 - 1.4.3 Submissions made in response to the exhibition of the draft Plan of Management 9
- PART 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE LAND AND BUILDINGS..... 10**
 - 2.1 Site Location..... 10
 - 2.2 Land, building ownership, and legal agreements 11
 - 2.3 Use of the Land 12
 - 2.3.1 Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters 12
 - 2.3.2 Lawson Community Hall 13
 - 2.4 Condition of Buildings on the Land 14
 - 2.4.1 Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters Condition 14
 - 2.4.2 Lawson Community Hall Condition 15
 - 2.5 Traffic Access and Parking 16
 - 2.6 Building Management 17
 - 2.7 Site Heritage 18
 - 2.7.1 Statement of Heritage Significance 18
 - 2.7.2 Heritage Assessment Report: Robert Staas 2004 18
- PART 3 POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT 22**
 - 3.1 *25 Year Vision for the City-Towards a More Sustainable Blue Mountains, 2000*..... 22
 - 3.2 *Sustainable Asset Management (SAM) Plan for Community Buildings 2004*..... 23
 - 3.3 *Towards a More Sustainable Blue Mountains 2004-2008*..... 24
 - 3.4 *Community Building Policy, 2002*..... 24
 - 3.5 *Area 3 Community Planning Report, 1988* 24
 - 3.6 *Mid Mountains Communities Facilities Project Report, 2003*..... 24
 - 3.7 *Draft Community Plan 2007* 24
 - 3.8 *Area 3 Generic Community Land Plan of Management, 2004* 25
 - 3.9 Environmental Planning and Building Controls 25
- PART 4 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION 26**
- PART 5 MANAGEMENT PURPOSE 34**
- PART 6 PERFORMANCE TARGETS, MEANS TO ACHIEVE TARGETS AND ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE 35**
- APPENDIX 1 A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY 39**
- APPENDIX 2 OPTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT 41**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Plan is intended to guide the Council in the management and use of part Lot 17, Section 1 D.P. 758605, 284 Great Western Highway, Lawson.

This land is best known as the location of two community buildings – the **Lawson Community Hall** (the former Lawson Mechanics Institute) and the **Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters**. The **Mid Mountains Youth Centre** operated from the Hall from the early 1990s until the Hall was closed to use in 2004.

The front portion of the original site, including part of the Hall, was resumed in 1989 for the purpose of widening the Highway. The RTA intends to demolish the front of the Hall in 2008.

The land is owned and managed by Blue Mountains City Council and:

- Classified as **Community Land**;
- Is hereby categorised as **General Community Use**. The land is also categorized as General Community Use under the Area 3 Community Land Plan of Management and also through this Plan;
- Zoned for **Village Housing- Accessible Housing precinct VH-LA03** under LEP 2005; and
- The Hall is proposed to be listed as an item of **local heritage significance** under Draft Amendment 1 to LEP2005, which has not yet been made.

The process of developing the Plan of Management identified a number of major issues including the need for:

- Provision of community buildings suitable for their purpose.
- Recognition of community concerns regarding loss of the Hall.
- Accommodation for youth services and for the Lawson RFS.
- Recognition of the heritage significance of the land and the Hall.
- Presentation of an attractive streetscape entry to the Lawson Town Centre.
- Operating within the financial constraints of the Council.

The primary actions to address these issues and facilitate future management are to:

- Recognise and interpret the heritage significance of Lawson Community Hall.
- Demolish the Hall.
- Relocate the RFS to a purpose built facility elsewhere in Lawson.
- Investigate options to accommodate youth services on the land including renovation of the existing RFS building.
- Review future management of the land after the relocation of the RFS and decisions are made on accommodation for youth services.

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this Plan of Management

This Plan of Management is for part Lot 17 Section 1 in D.P. 758605, 284 Great Western Highway, Lawson NSW and is intended to guide the Council in its management and use of the land.

The Purpose of the Plan is to:

- a. Describe the land and the buildings on the land;
- b. Set out the key considerations in setting a direction for the management of the land;
- c. Outline a range of issues and opportunities associated with the land;
- d. Identify the direction for future management of the land and buildings on the land; and
- e. Set out an action plan with objectives, strategies and performance targets for the management of the land.

The Vision for management of the land is:

To honour the history of the land and, in partnership with the community and other levels of government, provide facilities and services to meet current and future needs of the community of the Blue Mountains.

The Objectives for the management of the land are:

1. To ensure the buildings are appropriate for their use.
2. To recognise and honour the heritage significance of the land.
3. To ensure the site presents an attractive streetscape entry to Lawson Town Centre.
4. To ensure that the development, maintenance and use of the buildings on the site can be achieved within the financial resources available to the Council.
5. To allow for the granting of leases, licences or other estates that reflect community aspirations for this land are consistent with this Plan of Management and accord with the Local Government Act 1993.

1.2 Preparation of the Plan of Management

This Plan of Management has been prepared and structured in accordance with the requirements of NSW Local Government Act 1993. Section 36 of the Act requires that:

- All community land must have a plan of management;
- Community Land must be categorised;
- Plans must contain objectives for management of the land;
- The plan must include performance targets; and
- Plans must contain a means of achieving and assessing achievement of objectives and performance targets.

A Plan of Management that applies to just one area of community land must:

- Describe the condition of the land, and of any buildings or other improvements on the land, as at the date of adoption of the plan of management;
- Describe the use of the land and any such buildings or improvements as at that date;
- Specify the purposes for which the land, and any such buildings or improvements, will be permitted to be used;
- Specify the purposes for which any further development of the land will be permitted, whether under lease or licence or otherwise; and
- Describe the scale and intensity of any such permitted use or development.

Information used in preparation of this document included:

- A review of the previously exhibited Draft Plan of Management (prepared August 2004) and the submissions received on the draft Plan;
- A review of relevant literature;
- Communication with major user and stakeholder group representatives;
- Utilizing specialist knowledge from within Blue Mountains City Council;
- A building assessment including estimated costs for rebuilding the facade of Lawson Community Hall and for upgrade of the Hall and the Lawson Rural Fire Services headquarters;
- An Oral History Report on the Hall; and
- A Heritage Assessment Report on Lawson Community Hall.

1.3 Structure of the Plan of Management

This Plan of Management is structured into five different parts, and contains 2 Appendices with additional supporting information. These parts are: -

Part 1 which introduces the document.

Part 2 which gives a description of the land and the buildings.

Part 3 which present the strategic and policy context which provides for the direction for the management of the land and buildings.

Part 4 which identifies the issues and opportunities that this Plan of Management will seek to address and utilize, and which outlines the management framework.

Part 5 which outlines the purposes for which the land and buildings and any improvements on the land will be permitted to be used; and for which any further development of the land will be permitted; and describes the scale and intensity of any such permitted use or development.

Part 6 which comprises the Action Plan, and outlines the means by which the Council proposes to achieve the Plan's objectives and performance targets. It also outlines the manner in which the Council proposes to assess its performance in achieving the Plan's objectives and performance targets.

Appendix 1 which provides a short history of the land and buildings.

Appendix 2 which presents a summary of different options which were considered for the management of the land.

1.4 Consultation Undertaken in Preparation of this Plan

Consultation undertaken in preparation of the initial and this amended draft Plan of Management included:

- Email consultations and two community meetings held in June 2004;
- A letterbox drop to households in the Mid Mountains towns of Lawson, Bullaburra, Hazelbrook and Woodford, seeking feedback on a number of options for management of the land and buildings;
- A Public Hearing conducted in 2004; and
- Exhibition of the draft Plan of Management for the Community Land in 2004-5.

The results of these various consultations have been documented and have been taken into account in the preparation of this amended draft Plan of Management. A summary of the findings is provided below.

1.4.1 *Lawson Community Hall Plan of Management Community Consultation Report, June 2004*

60 to 70 people participated in an email consultation and 2 public meetings. The report identified issues and ranked prospective objectives for consideration in development of the Plan of Management.

1.4.2 *Lawson Community Hall & Rural Fire Service Plan of Management Public Hearing Report, October 2004*

A Public Hearing was conducted by Mr Declan Tierney for the Council on 29th September 2004. The report on the Public Hearing recommended that:

- The land continues to be classified as community land;
- The legal status and ownership of the land be investigated and the findings reported back to the community;
- The Council pay particular attention to the heritage aspects of the Community Hall in determining the future of the Hall and the impact of its partial demolition;
- The Council investigate the appropriateness of categorising part or all of the land as an area of cultural significance, and report back its findings to the community; and
- Investigations continue to identify an alternative site for the Rural Fire Service.

1.4.3 *Submissions made in response to the exhibition of the draft Plan of Management*

The draft Plan of Management was exhibited from October 2004 to February 2005 and 27 submissions were received. One contained 49 signatures and another comprised a petition to retain the Hall containing 161 signatures.

The issues raised in the submissions included:

- Questions relating to the ownership of the land;
- General agreement that the RFS should be relocated;
- A strong push to "Save the Hall" and to reconstruct the façade;
- Support for continuation of a youth centre in Lawson; and
- Some support for the demolition of the Hall.

PART 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE LAND AND BUILDINGS

This section gives a description of the land, its current uses and outlines the social, cultural and building uses of the land.

2.1 Site Location

The land to which this Plan of Management applies is part lot 17, Section 1 in DP 758605, 284 Great Western Highway, Lawson.

The land is bounded to the north by the Great Western Highway and to the south by Yileena Ave; to the west by private residential property and to the east partly by private residential property and partly by vacant land currently owned by the RTA.

This land contains the Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters and Lawson Community Hall, also known as Lawson Mechanics Institute.

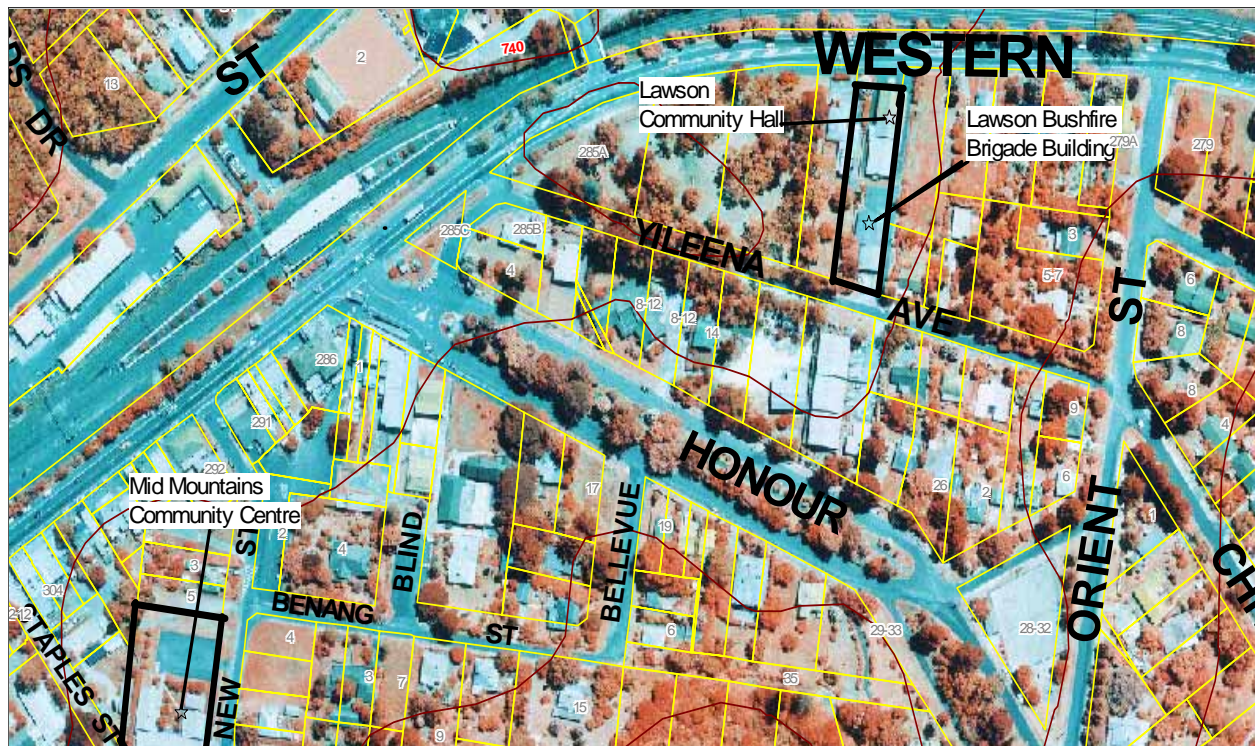


Figure 1: Aerial photo showing location of the Hall, RFS and MM Community Centre

The Community Hall is located on an ascending gradient approaching the town centre from the east and has traditionally been seen as one of the entry statements to Lawson. This aspect has been accentuated in recent years with the demolition of dwellings to the east as part of the preparation works for the widening of the Great Western Highway.

The closest community hall is a complex of three public halls with offices and meeting rooms at Mid Mountains Community Centre 500m to the west. There are Rural Fire Service Headquarters at Hazelbrook to the east and Bullaburra to the west. The Mid Mountains Youth Centre operates from the former Lawson Uniting Church on a short

term rental basis. Youth centres also operate in Katoomba to the west, and Springwood, Mt Riverview and Winmalee to the east.

2.2 Land, building ownership, and legal agreements

The land was granted by the Crown for the site of a Mechanics Institute at Lawson by Gazettal of a notice dated 1st February 1899. The title was transferred under the provisions of Section 105 of the Crown Lands Act of 1884, and Section 7 of the Public Trusts Act 1897 to the Council of the City of Blue Mountains on 19th November 1958 (subject to reservations and conditions). However it was discovered in 2004 that although the transfer of title to the Council was recorded by the then Registrar General's Office on 3 June 1959 the title still contained encumbrances under the Trustees of School of Arts Enabling Act 1902 which had been intended to be extinguished by the 1958 transfer. The Department of Lands have addressed this matter and the title has been amended by the Land and Property Information Service to show the proprietorship of the land by the Council of the City of Blue Mountains without any encumbrance.

The Department of Main Roads (now the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA)) resumed part of the land for road widening purposes. This resumption was effected by publication of a notice in the Government Gazette on 4th August 1989. The resumption includes the front portion of the Hall to a depth of 9.258 metres. This part of the Hall is now located on Lot 7 in DP 231856 which does not form part of this Plan of Management. Consequently the RTA has the right, subject to securing any necessary development approval and meeting its conditions, to demolish the portico, facade and the front portion of Lawson Community Hall in order to make way for the widening of the Great Western Highway. Compensation for acquisition of the land and the Hall was \$200,000 and this made up a significant component of the capital funding for the construction of the Mid Mountains Community Centre, some 500 metres to the west.



Figure 2: The portion of the Hall owned by the RTA is indicated by the line.

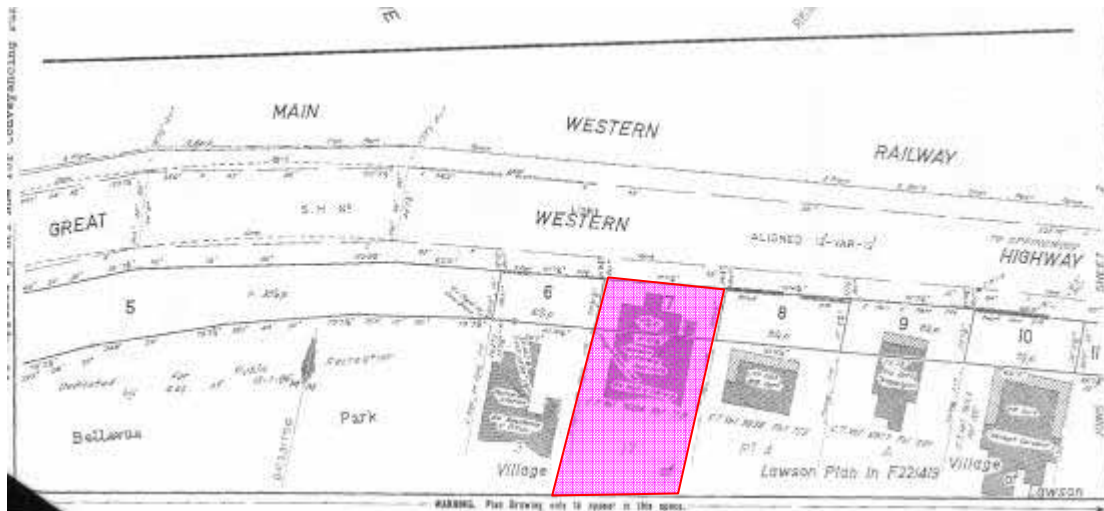


Figure 3: Plan of Road Resumption dated 1965 showing the Lawson Mechanic's Institute Site. The area resumed is indicated by the line set 10 metres from the original boundary and is marked as Lot 7.

2.3 Use of the Land

The land currently has two buildings and a small parking area on it. The buildings and their use are described below.

2.3.1 Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters

This building is used by Lawson Rural Fire Service (RFS). The brigade has about 150 members, of which 50 are active and the rest are active in emergencies. Brigade members meet weekly and there are special events every two to three weeks. These events range from training activities to community events such as the Woodford to Glenbrook fun run. The brigade has three vehicles - a Category 1 tanker, a Category 2 tanker, and a Personnel Carrier.

During emergencies, the RFS building acts as a response coordination centre and can be very busy. For example during the December 2001- January 2002 bushfires, Lawson station was used as a divisional command. This saw the station in use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with sometimes in excess of 100 people and 15 to 25 fire tankers situated there. The RFS was fortunate in being able to use the vacant block next to the Hall for staging their heavy equipment. Most of the heavy equipment gained access to the land via the Great Western Highway. The Yileena Ave access was not suitable in width and load bearing capacity for these vehicles. The RFS also accessed the Hall to accommodate some of its activities.

The RFS building is also used by community groups such as the Blue Mountains Amateur radio, the University of the Third Age (who meet there three times a week) and the Country Women's Association (who meet in the building on a weekly basis). These organisations make small donations to assist in the RFS with costs.

2.3.2 Lawson Community Hall

Lawson Community Hall is also known as the former Lawson Mechanics Institute. The original part of the building was opened as a Mechanic's Institute on 19th December 1903. A chronological history of the Hall is provided in Appendix 1. Up to the 1930s it was the only public hall in Lawson and was popular for all types of entertainment. For a short period in 1907 the newly formed Blue Mountains Shire Council operated from the building. Up to the 1950s the Hall was a focal point for community life in Lawson. The Hall was closed to use in 2004.

The building contains a public hall, foyer, kitchen, storage rooms, toilets, offices and an activity room. The public hall was licensed for 350 persons, and the supper room had a licensed capacity of 80 persons. In 1990 the building was altered for the Mid Mountains Youth Centre which operated from offices and an activity room at the rear of the building, and had the right to use the hall when there were no bookings. Apart from a drop-in service, the Youth Centre ran a Community Learning Program, youth drama workshops and living skills workshops.

The Youth Centre is funded to cater to young people in the 12-18 year age group, with young women accessing the youth centre more frequently than young males. The Youth Worker states that there are between 30 and 40 members of the Youth Centre. It currently operates from rental premises.

After the opening of the Mid Mountains Community Centre in 1991, use of the public hall dropped considerably. In 2003 there were two regular weekly hirers and the front hall was booked 20 times during 2003 by casual hirers. The total income from bookings of the public hall and associated facilities was \$2169.



Figure 4: Lawson Community Hall

2.4 Condition of Buildings on the Land

The condition of the two buildings on the land is outlined below.

2.4.1 Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters Condition

The Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters was built in 1980 and extended in 1996-7. Construction was financed with contributions from the Council, the NSW Rural Fire Service, and the Lawson Brigade.

The building has an area of 212 square metres. The exterior is double brick cavity walls, with colourbond roof; quad and highline gutters and down pipes; and aluminium sliding windows with weld mesh security bars fixed internally. There is one main entry door and three large roller doors.

The interior consists of a concrete floor slab, brick walls, and plaster board ceiling - except in the truck bays. The rooms consist of: 2 fire truck bays; master meeting room; kitchen with bench unit, sink and zip mini boiler; toilet with WC, shower, and hand basin; radio room and store.

There is a sealed access road and parking area, two concrete strip driveways, concrete paved area, concrete footpath around building, and a sleeper and masonry block retaining wall. The area between the rear of the Community Hall and former youth centre building and the RFS building is open ground used as an unformed car park for approximately 4 cars.

The roof height of the RFS building is inadequate to permit access for the current (taller) model of fire truck, and this limits the ability of the station to update its vehicles. Future vehicular access to the site will be from Yileena Avenue only as a result of the Highway widening. The building is considered to be inadequate for long term use by the RFS for these reasons.



Figure 5: Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters facing south

2.4.2 Lawson Community Hall Condition

The Council commissioned a building assessment report on the Hall from C. S. Barratt Building Consultants in 2004. This report was updated in October 2006. The following description of the condition of the Community Hall borrows extensively from the Barratt reports.

The building is approximately 100 years old. The public hall was built in 1903 and various additions and modifications were made to the building since that time.

The building is partially a full brick and partially a timber-framed, painted weatherboard clad constructed community hall building, with a partial suspended timber, partial concrete floor and a colour coated zincalume sheet covered roof. The building contains the main hall incorporating a stage, a chair storage room, a separate storage room (off the chair storage room), a ladies toilet, a gentlemen's toilet, an office, a supper room, a kitchen and a meeting room. There is also a rear, externally accessible, toilet room. The building entrance faces north.

The sub-floor to the main building, incorporating the stage, is not accessible due to a lack of reasonable head height. The roof space to the main hall is not accessible due to the raked nature of the ceilings.

Comparing this property with other properties of its age and location, its overall condition is considered to be average. The building is generally in a sound and serviceable condition but requires substantial refurbishment works in order to partially comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and Australian Standards. The building will never strictly comply with the BCA as its materials do not meet current occupational health and safety standards, the walls are not plumb, termite protection is deficient and the building was not built in accordance with what are now considered best practice standards.

A safety audit of the building using Safer by Design principles indicates that the building is a significant risk in its present state. However there are many things that could be done to the building to reduce increase its safety and these matters were identified in the options considered for the refurbishment of the building. (See Appendix 2 for a summary of these).

2.5 Traffic Access and Parking

In the past, parking has been available for users of the land in the following locations:

- Along the Great Western Highway adjoining the site.
- Unformed car parking spaces for up to 4 cars behind the Hall.
- On the adjacent block of RTA owned land.
- Undercover parking for three RFS vehicles within the RFS building.

The widening of the Great Western Highway will impact on the availability of parking for the site:

- There will no longer be parking available on the Great Western Highway.
- There is no kerb side parking in Yileena Avenue, nor is there any opportunity to provide such parking in the future.
- The adjacent RTA owned land will not be available for parking in future, unless the Council purchases the land at market value.

The Building Assessment of the Hall estimated that with careful design, 11 car spaces could be provided on site. This is insufficient to cater for the Hall and the RFS.

Vehicle access to the site is currently via both Yileena Avenue and the Great Western Highway. Traffic currently can enter and exit Yileena Avenue at Orient Street and via Douglass Square to Honour Avenue.

With the widening of the Great Western Highway, the only vehicle access to the site will be via Orient Street and Yileena Avenue. There will be neither access from the Great Western Highway, nor access to Yileena Avenue from Honour Avenue and Douglass Square.

Traffic signal control and an at grade pedestrian crossing for the Highway is proposed for the San Jose Bridge which adjoins Bellevue Park to the west of the site. A 2.5 metre wide shared footpath/ cycle way is proposed along the southern side of the Highway and adjoining the site. For the T junction intersection of Orient Street and the Great Western Highway the RTA propose seagull channelisation which allows all traffic movements.

In 2006 the Council engaged Complete Urban Solutions and Transport and Urban Planning to undertake a Traffic Study for Lawson. This study makes recommendations to improve access to the site. The existing alignment at the Orient Street/ Christabel Street/ Yileena Avenue intersection is difficult due to the angle of the intersecting streets. The traffic study proposes channelisation to improve this intersection. No funding has been made available to implement the Traffic Study at this time.

2.6 Building Management

The land has had a century long association with community activities and community management. Through the Mechanics Institute, it has been associated with working class education and recreation, activities for young people, community management and voluntary community efforts. This association has been continuous until 2004 through the education and recreation activities of the Mid Mountains Youth Centre, and to the present through the community activities of the Lawson Rural Fire Service.

Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters

The Lawson Rural Fire Service is managed by an elected committee responsible for the brigade activities and associated finances. It operates as an arm of the NSW Rural Fire Service. The Council has entered into a service level agreement with the NSW Rural Fire Service that provides a licence for the Lawson Bushfire Brigade to occupy and use the Council owned building. Funding for the maintenance and operation of the building is provided through the Council's Assets budget and through the Emergency Services Levy.

Lawson Community Hall

The Hall was closed to use in 2004 and is currently empty, although basic maintenance of the building has been continued. The Council funds the ongoing maintenance and operation of the building through its Assets budget.

Public Hall: In the past the Council had a community committee managing the public hall and associated facilities until this arrangement proved unviable, with the committee disbanding through lack of community involvement. In 2001, an agreement was reached with the Youth Futures Group (the incorporated body managing the Mid Mountains Youth Centre) to manage the bookings of the public hall, as an agent of the Council.

Mid Mountains Youth Centre: The Youth Centre is managed as a community organisation, incorporated under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act. It is funded for its staffing and programs by the NSW Department of Community Services. Management of the Youth Centre is by a voluntary community based management committee. In the past, the Council entered into an arrangement with the Mid Mountains Youth Centre within the framework of the Council's Community Buildings Policy. This provided the youth centre with exclusive use of the office and activity rooms, and with rights to use the Public Hall at certain times. The youth centre was responsible for the first \$300 of the total cost for each individual minor and urgent maintenance activity to their exclusive use areas.

The youth centre moved from the Hall when it was closed in 2004 and it currently operates from the former Uniting Church on the corner of Yileena Avenue and the Great Western Highway on a short term rental basis.

2.7 Site Heritage

The Blue Mountains Heritage Study (2002) and Amendment No 1 LEP to 2005 identify Lawson Community Hall as having local heritage significance.

An oral history of the Hall has been undertaken by the historian, Mr Paul Innes, and a Heritage Assessment Report has been prepared by heritage consultant, Robert Staas of Noel Bell Ridley Smith and Partners. This Plan draws heavily on the Staas report for the description and management of heritage issues.

2.7.1 Statement of Heritage Significance

“The Lawson Mechanics Institute has considerable local cultural heritage significance for its historical role in the education, entertainment and social life of Lawson village, particularly in the first half of the 20th century, for its social role in the continuing community life of Lawson and as a representative example of a Mechanic’s Institute building that demonstrates a way of life prevalent throughout NSW in the late 19th century and early 20th century. The early section of the building including the later porch also has some local significance for its prominent contribution to the streetscape of the Lawson Village Core.”

2.7.2 Heritage Assessment Report: Robert Staas 2004

The Heritage Assessment Report indicates that some of the identified heritage value of place is reflected in the current physical form of the Hall despite modifications and additions to its early configuration. It states that the strongest visual heritage character is associated with the front of the building that is proposed for demolition for the road widening.

Graded areas of significance are as follows:

- The original hall fabric has the highest level of significance.
- The later stage and toilets and the northern porch have moderate significance
- The Inter War additions at the rear of the hall have some significance.
- The eastern verandah addition has little significance.
- The Rural Fire Service structures have no heritage significance.
- The site has low archaeological potential.
- Bricks used in the original Hall were recovered from demolition of the original Blue Mountains Railway Station and there is potential to recover these bricks.

The following heritage assessment is based on the NSW Heritage Office criterion and is extracted from the Staas Report.

Criterion (a) Historic Evolution:

(An item is important in the course or pattern of the cultural history of the local area)

“The Lawson Mechanics Institute has local cultural heritage significance for this criterion as it provides evidence of the physical and cultural evolution of the town.

The Lawson Mechanics Institute has a central position in the 20th century evolution of the village of Lawson. Together with the railway station, the hotel and the major churches, the Mechanics Institute was an important and focal institution in the social fabric of the town. This is clearly shown by the many references in local press articles about functions and occasions of local significance that occurred there throughout the early decades of the 20th century. The building provided facilities for library, meeting hall and recreation that supported and sustained local community activity.

The building is evidence of an education movement in NSW that saw the establishment of Mechanics Institutes, and later Schools of Art and Literary Institutes, throughout the state over the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The highest levels of activity associated with the place occurred up to the mid 20th century when tourism to the mountains was at its peak and before the social and cultural changes brought about by social mobility, widespread car ownership and the introduction of television. The evolutionary character is evidenced by the more recent use as a local youth facility.”

Criterion (b) Historic Associations: (An item is important for the strong or special associations with historical events or the life and works of individuals or groups of importance to the local area.)

“The Lawson Mechanics Institute has local cultural heritage significance for this criterion as it provides evidence of the association with many prominent members of the local community and with many local activities and events that were significant to the local community.

The Lawson Mechanics Institute is evidence of associations with a number of persons and groups that were influential in the development of the local area. Because of its strong community base the influence of local community members as trustees and office bearers of the institution is evident. The place has also been the location of many significant local events, particularly in the period before the Second World War. These are documented in numerous newspaper articles and have some level of local significance in the overall history of the village. The associations are not physically represented on the site but are documented in other sources. The building is also associated with the reconstruction of the Lawson Railway station as bricks from the former station platform are incorporated into the existing building fabric.”

Criterion (c) Aesthetic / Technical achievement:

(An item is significant in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and or a high degree of creative or technical achievement)

“While the Lawson Mechanics Institute does not reflect a high degree of creative or technical achievement, being representative rather than outstanding as an example of its type, it makes a considerable positive contribution to the immediate context and is locally significant for this landmark value.”

The design and construction of the Lawson Mechanics Institute is relatively unremarkable on a comparative assessment with other similar buildings throughout the country. The design of the main northern façade and the later porch addition is somewhat ‘old fashioned’ for the period in which it was erected and demonstrates only a superficial understanding of architectural design principles. Nevertheless the presentation to the Great Western Highway has considerable visual presence and acts to identify a gateway to the village proper. This effect is increased by the projecting form of the later porch.”

Criterion (d) Social Values:

(An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the local area for social or cultural reasons)

“Despite no empirical evidence as to the strength of community concern, it appears that the place has Local significance under this value for the community as a whole and for the special interest groups in particular.”

The Lawson Mechanics Institute has been intimately related to local community use and interest since it was first constructed. The place is generally recognized as an important element of the physical and social fabric of the town by many residents. Active concern for the welfare and future of the place has also been expressed over a number of decades by a smaller number of active residents concerned for the continued presence of the building on the site and the continued use of the site and its facilities for community purposes. The building is obviously an important element in the local community’s sense of place and this is established by at least some of the community and by special interest groups within the community for its cultural heritage values as much as for its utility.”

Criterion (e) Research Potential:

(An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the area’s cultural history)

“The Lawson Mechanics Institute building has little potential to provide information that is not available elsewhere and is not significant for this value.”

Criterion (f) Rarity Values:

(An item possesses uncommon or rare aspects of the area's cultural history)

“The Lawson Mechanics Institute building is not rare being one of several similar halls used for community purposes in the Mid Mountains area. The building provides no specific evidence of the specific ‘Mechanics Institute’ or ‘Literary Institute’ uses that gave rise to its erection and early use in the 20th century.”

Criterion (g) Representativeness:

(An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places)

“The Lawson Mechanics Institute is representative and typical of local community use buildings and the Inter War way of life associated with its previous use patterns. The building was one of several in the Blue Mountains that were erected about the same time to serve the different communities.”

PART 3 POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT

The Council manages community assets and resources within a framework of legislation and adopted policies and plans. This section sets out the Council's strategic planning and policy documents which affect the planning and management of this land and community buildings on the land.

3.1 25 Year Vision for the City-Towards a More Sustainable Blue Mountains, 2000

Within the 25 year vision for the City there are two key directions in particular that are relevant for this Plan of Management. These are:

Looking after people

- The health and wellbeing of Blue Mountains people are improved.
- Services and facilities are accessible and fairly distributed.
- Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring and inclusive.

Using land for living

- A strong sense of local identity and place is created.
- Well managed infrastructure supports sustainable living.
- The liveability and vibrancy of our towns and villages are strengthened.

"Towards a More Sustainable Blue Mountains- A Map for Action 2000-2025" sets out a course of action to shape the City including priorities for attention over the first 5-10 years. Those priorities most relevant to Community Buildings and this Plan are:

- Develop preventative programs to improve the health of the community, particularly those most in need;
- Maximise opportunities and partnerships to achieve better utilisation of existing recreational, sporting and cultural facilities;
- Increase residents access to services which meet community needs, targeting in particular younger and older people;
- Develop service centres with appropriate levels of service provision that maximise access and benefits;
- Ensure decision making supports fair allocation of resources, services and facilities;
- Enhance the distinctive qualities of our towns and villages to strengthen local identity and sense of place;
- Encourage and recognise the highest standards of design;
- Understand the condition and capacity of existing infrastructure to support sustainable living; and
- Centralise the location of services and facilities in key service centres.

Underpinning the preparation of this Plan is the Council's Vision for asset management which involves:

- Living within our means;
- Restraint on funding for expansion of new capital infrastructure; and
- Rigorous cost/benefit and Triple Bottom Line analysis for new capital projects.

3.2 Sustainable Asset Management (SAM) Plan for Community Buildings 2004

The Council is custodian of a significant community building portfolio consisting of:

- 29 Welfare/ Cultural Facilities;
- 19 Public Halls and Meeting Places; and
- 11 Child Care Centres.

The estimated replacement value of these facilities is \$30.6 million.

Key points of the SAM Plan for Community Buildings relevant to this Plan of Management include the following:

- Many welfare/cultural facilities have been developed only after significant voluntary effort, and in some cases financial contribution.
- Public halls and meeting places are a precious resource in each township and need to be managed with sensitivity to meet community demand.
- There is a clear disparity and perceived inequality in the allocation of community buildings and resources across the mountains.
- The average age of Halls and Welfare/cultural buildings is 51 years. Halls are generally older and significantly more expensive to operate and maintain than welfare/cultural buildings.
- The average maintenance costs for community buildings over the next 10 years are estimated at \$410,000 per annum. This is currently unfunded.
- Average renewal requirements for the next 10 years are approximately \$570,000 per annum of which only 6% is funded.
- Without adequate funding for maintenance and renewal, the condition and level of service of these buildings will continue to decline at an escalating rate.
- As the condition of a building deteriorates maintenance and operational costs will escalate.
- There will be opportunity over time to rationalise or consolidate welfare/cultural facilities across the city into far more cost efficient and purpose built facilities.

Key actions identified in the SAM Plan for Community Buildings relevant to this Plan of Management are:

- Investigate alternative solutions to 'maintaining what we have' as the current model is economically unsustainable.
- Investigate alternative funding sources to meet expected demand for community buildings including potential to increase cost recovery from user groups, particularly for services that come under the auspices of State and Federal Government agencies.
- Develop more robust procedures to assess the Triple Bottom Line benefit of community buildings.
- Develop more rigorous methods for determining usage patterns of community buildings.
- Develop processes to assign service levels for community buildings.

- Develop/ review rationalisation, disposal, renewal and capital works plans for community buildings.

3.3 *Towards a More Sustainable Blue Mountains 2004-2008*

This Management Plan sets out the Council's response to the 25 year vision statement for the years 2004-8, and includes the Asset Management and the Capital Works Programs for this period.

3.4 *Community Building Policy, 2002*

This policy sets out the partnership arrangements between community service organisations and the Council over the occupation and use of community buildings. It defines the roles and responsibilities of the Council and community management committees, and sets out a pricing policy and annual process for setting fees and charges.

3.5 *Area 3 Community Planning Report, 1988*

This report set out the issues faced by the Mid Mountains Youth Centre in working from a run down and degraded building. It also identified the need for a youth services centre, and the desirability of establishing Lawson as a community service centre.

3.6 *Mid Mountains Communities Facilities Project Report, 2003*

This report was undertaken by Elton Consulting and ECOdesign and it examined the requirements for community service accommodation and opportunities to meet these in the Mid Mountains. Recommendations included:

- *"The future of the Youth Centre should be secured, preferably by identifying specific funding for the works required to repair the existing building after highway widening. "*
- *"Space for the BM Recreational Youth Development Service should be provided either at the Old Council Chamber or at Lawson Hall, subject to further feasibility and design assessment."*

3.7 *Draft Community Plan 2007*

The Community Plan identifies the need for youth services and a youth facility in the Mid Mountains and relevant key actions for the Council over the period of 2007-2012 being to:

- Address priority youth and aged care community service facility needs in the Mid Mountains as part of the Lawson Town Centre redevelopment.
- Investigate options for co-location and external funding of a range of Citywide and area-focused youth services in the Mid-Mountains.

3.8 Area 3 Generic Community Land Plan of Management, 2004

Area 3 Generic Community Land Plan of Management (Area 3 PoM) covers all Community Land in Area 3. It categorises Part Lot 17 Section 1 DP758605 as **general community use**. Area 3 PoM sets out the general provisions for the management of community land in the City of the Blue Mountains and the special management provisions for land categorised as general community use.

The general provisions of the Area PoM, including the general licensing schedule, will apply to Part Lot 17 Section 1 DP758605 while this site specific Plan of Management incorporates more detailed provisions for the management of the land, and reflects the requirements of the Local Government Act.

3.9 Environmental Planning and Building Controls

- Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2005 (LEP 2005) zones the land covered by this Plan of Management as Village—Housing. Associated provisions include the Lawson Precinct VH-LA03 - Accessible Housing Precinct. The Accessible Housing Area enables the land to be used for Seniors Housing, and the precinct sets out the particular development standards, objectives and policies applicable to that precinct.
- Development within the area is defined by precinct provisions. Any redevelopment of the site must address the precinct vision statement; precinct objectives; building envelope including building height, setback, site coverage; design consideration; and amenity and safety.
- Community buildings and places of assembly are permitted in this zone.
- Maximum site cover is 50% of the lot, and 40% of the lot is to be retained as soft pervious landscaping. This will affect areas available for building and for parking.
- Draft Amendment 1 to LEP2005 identifies the Hall as being of local heritage significance.
- Part 3 Division 4 of LEP 2005 relates to Heritage Conservation and details the requirements relating to proposed development or demolition of a heritage item. Clause 70 requires that demolishing or moving a heritage item or ...building within a heritage conservation area may only be carried out with development consent. Clause 71 states that development consent shall not be granted until the consent authority has considered a heritage impact statement. The demolition of a heritage item is identified as advertised development.
- Any new building work would need to comply with:
 - Building Code of Australia;
 - Fire Safety Regulations;
 - Disability Discrimination Act requirements for equitable and full access to the building.
- Experience with the upgrade of older buildings shows that this often leads to replacement of major parts of the building, and this can be as expensive as erecting a new building.

PART 4 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

This section of the Plan examines the range of issues affecting the use and management of the land and how this Plan of Management seeks to address them. This section is structured as follows:

Objectives:	What do we wish to achieve?
Issue:	What are the issues that need to be considered?
Opportunities:	What potential opportunities exist that need to be considered?
Strategies:	The management strategies that address the issues and opportunities and that provide guidelines to achieve the Plan's Vision and Objectives.

The Vision for management of the land is:

To honour the history of the land and in partnership with the community and other levels of government provide facilities and services to meet the current and future needs of the community of the Blue Mountains.

Under this Plan the land is **categorised** as **General Community Use**.

The Objectives of the Plan with respect to the land are consistent with the core objectives for general community use under Section 36(4) of the Local Government Act 1993, and are:

1. *To ensure the buildings on the land are appropriate for their community use.*
2. *To recognise and honour the heritage significance of the land.*
3. *To ensure the site presents an attractive streetscape entry to Lawson Town Centre.*
4. *To ensure that the development, maintenance and use of the buildings on the site can be achieved within the financial resources available to the Council.*
5. *To allow for the granting of leases, licences or other estates that reflect community aspirations for this land; are consistent with this Plan of Management; and accord with the Local Government Act 1993.*

The Purposes which are permitted for use of the land and buildings and any further development of the land are outlined in Part 5 of this Plan.

The Performance Targets of the Plan with respect to the land are set out in Part 6 of this Plan.

The Means by which the Council proposes to assess its performance with respect to this Plan's objectives and performance targets is identified in Part 6 of this Plan. The actions of the Plan, in summary, are to be:

- Recognition of the heritage significance of the land and Lawson Community Hall;
- Demolition of the Lawson Community Hall;
- Development of a new headquarters for Lawson Rural Fire Service elsewhere within Lawson;
- Retention of the site as Community Land subject to further investigation of co-location of the Mid Mountains Youth Centre and city wide youth services;
- Further investigation of the upgrade of the existing RFS building for the use of the Mid Mountains Youth Centre.

Objective 1:

To ensure the buildings on the land are appropriate for their use

Issues

The proposed changes being made with the Highway widening will greatly affect the capacity of the existing buildings on the land to continue to fulfil their past purposes which were:

- Public hall;
- Youth centre facilities; and
- Lawson Rural Fire Services Headquarters.

The Public Hall:

- The Hall had a licensed capacity of 350 persons. With the proposed demolition of the front portion of the building the capacity of the public hall would be reduced by approximately 100 persons. The front façade and entrance to the Hall would need replacement and building modifications would be required to cater for disabled access throughout the building and to toilets and the kitchen area. This would be likely to reduce the capacity of the supper room and storage rooms.
- The ongoing maintenance of the Hall will be costly as the building fabric is aging.
- The integrity of the buildings structure may be compromised by its partial demolition.
- In recent years the hall has been largely superseded by the facilities of the Mid Mountains Community Centre which has three functioning halls with capacities of 300, 80 and 80 persons, and additional community meeting space for up to 30 people was provided in 2004.
- The Community Centre is well used and heavily booked. There is some evidence of demand for additional licensed hall and meeting space in the Mid Mountains but there does not appear to be adequate demand to fund the construction and/or operation of an additional facility.

Mid Mountains Youth Centre and City wide Youth Services:

- Lawson Hall does not contain key facilities needed by the youth centre and city wide youth services. For example: there are no appropriate rooms for interviews or counselling, proper food preparation area, wet activity space or disability facilities. For long term use of Lawson Hall by youth services major renovations would be required.
- The RFS will not vacate the site until completion of the Highway widening and construction of a new headquarters in approximately 2010-2011.
- The Youth Centre currently operates from temporary accommodation and critically need an alternative.
- The nature of youth work is changing with youth centres moving away from a “drop-in” model and towards a more collaborative approach based on partnership building and sharing of resources with other youth centres as well as schools, businesses and churches. This approach aims at reaching a much wider group of young people.
- There is also a trend for amalgamation of youth services in response to a changing funding environment and to address previous gaps in service. A number of mountain based services have already amalgamated and are experiencing problems finding accommodation.

- Many youth services in similar communities across NSW are centralising and consolidating their skills and expertise by co-locating. This offers efficiencies in office and administration costs as well as improving access for youth, especially for those most at risk.

The RFS building:

- The existing building is unable to accommodate the new and taller generation of fire tankers that are being brought into use. The NSW Rural Fire Service plan to relocate the Lawson Headquarters and their preferred site is located on the corner of Henry St and the Great Western Highway. This land is currently owned by the RTA and will be used as a works depot for the widening of the Highway. The Council is to negotiate the purchase of the site from the RTA with the view to construction of a new RFS Building on the Henry St site after 2010.
- This will leave the existing RFS building vacant and available for a change of use or demolition. The Council has undertaken a preliminary investigation into the renovation of this building for reuse as a Youth Centre, and this is believed to provide a cost effective option for long term accommodation.

Parking: The space available for parking on the land is insufficient to enable all three functions of public hall, youth centre and rural fire service headquarters to continue without the purchase of additional land, or removal of functions.

Access: After highway widening vehicle access to or from the land will be restricted to the narrow Yileena Avenue and will not be available from the Great Western Highway.

Opportunities

- There are opportunities to provide an RFS building elsewhere within Lawson with good access to the Highway, appropriate zoning, and adequate accommodation for equipment.
- Demolition of the Lawson Hall would reduce the liability of the Council for ongoing maintenance and renewal of aged and deteriorated community building stock.
- There are opportunities to modify or extend the existing RFS building or to build new facilities to accommodate the Youth Centre together with community meeting space and/or offices for citywide youth services.
- External funding opportunities exist to assist provision of a youth service facility.

Strategy

1. To demolish the Lawson Community Hall in a safe and timely manner.
2. To acquire an alternative site and construct improved facilities for the Lawson Rural Fire Service.
3. To investigate opportunities to provide better facilities for the young people of the Mid Mountains on this site or elsewhere in Lawson in the short and longer term.
4. To investigate opportunities for co-location of city wide and local youth services either on this site or elsewhere within Lawson.
5. Subject to the outcomes of Strategies 3 and 4 to retain the site for community uses or review requirements for community facilities and consider the reclassification of the land and its sale to fund provision of facilities for youth elsewhere within Lawson.

Objective 2:

To recognise and honour the local heritage significance of the land

Issues

- The issues relating to the heritage of the site and building are detailed in the Heritage Assessment Report by Robert Staas of Noel Bell Ridley Smith & Partners and are summarised in Part 2.7 of this Plan of Management.
- The Lawson Community Hall has local heritage significance for Historic Evolution, Historic Associations, Aesthetic and Social values. It is important that these values are appropriately acknowledged and documented in any planning and future use of the site.
- In managing the heritage values of the site, there is the need to recognise the constraints imposed by the Council's financial resources and the requirements to provide safe and well maintained community facilities.
- The original hall fabric has the highest local heritage significance within the site and the existing aesthetic values are largely related to the front façade to the Great Western Highway. A major portion of this part of the building is to be demolished for the Highway widening.
- Reconstruction of the detail of the existing façade on a truncated building is an option which would meet the desire of some members of the community. This action has some limited heritage value but does not address the significant amenity, health & safety and access deficiencies that the re-constructed building would present for continued community use.

Opportunities

- There are opportunities to negotiate with the Roads and Traffic Authority for the dismantling of the façade and remainder of the building in such a manner that as many as possible of the original bricks and other materials, which may be identified to have significance, are preserved and stored for later reuse.
- There are opportunities for interpretation, documentation and archival recording of the Lawson Community Hall which are independent of retention of the shortened and re-constructed Hall.

Strategy

1. To prepare an interpretative strategy for the site that provides evidence of the long and varied social significance of the place in the evolution of the Village of Lawson. This would specifically address the reuse of the bricks and other significant materials recovered from the demolition and would include where feasible the recommendations of the Staas report.
2. Seek a continuation of broad community involvement in the site by ensuring community input into the development of the heritage strategy, the provision of community meeting space in Lawson and community partnership in the management of future facilities and services.

Objective 3:

To ensure the site provides an attractive streetscape entry to Lawson Town Centre.

Issues

- The current façade and portico make a strong visual statement to the entry to Lawson. This section of the building will be demolished as part of the highway widening.
- The widening of the highway will also alter the angle and elevation of the road relative to the site.
- There is strong community interest in ensuring that there is an attractive entry statement in the approach to the Lawson Town Centre precinct in this section of highway.
- Environmental planning controls over the area require new buildings to reflect the pattern, scale and architectural style of traditional Mountain-style cottages surrounded by gardens. Precinct provisions cover building setback, building height, building character, site coverage, and minimum area of pervious surface. Provisions require that parking areas should not dominate any street frontage and should be integrated with the design of surrounding landscape areas.

Opportunities

- There are opportunities to enhance the visual amenity of the site through its redevelopment using careful design of the building/s and landscape.
- There may also be an opportunity to use some of the bricks saved from the façade in the building redevelopment or in landscaping either on this site or elsewhere within Lawson.

Strategy

Include in the design brief for any redevelopment of the community land, the need for aesthetic development of the buildings and landscape to present well to the Highway and Yilleena Avenue.

Objective 4:

To ensure that the development, maintenance and use of the buildings on the site can be achieved within the financial resources available to the Council.

Issues

- Blue Mountains City Council has limited financial resources. In consideration of options for management of the site it is important to ensure that the full life cycle costs of modified, retrofitted and new buildings are considered.
- The existing Hall is approximately 100 years old and expensive to maintain. Estimated costs to retain the Hall in a basic but safe state exceed those to reuse the RFS building. Estimated costs to renovate the Hall are approximately equal to a new building of similar size, but the building fabric would remain aged and require higher levels of maintenance than a newer building.
- A number of options have been considered in development of this Plan involving variously: demolition of buildings; adaptation of buildings for reuse; construction of new buildings on the site or elsewhere; and relocation or modification of service delivery. These options range in cost from an estimated \$670,000 to \$1,400,000. Appendix 1 provides a summary of these options.
- The constraints imposed by the site and the Council's financial resources make it difficult to continue all three functions - namely public hall, youth centre and bushfire brigade - on the existing site after the widening of the Highway.

Opportunities

- Modification of existing buildings and/or new buildings on the site for community use could incorporate measures for energy and water efficiency and measures to reduce the ongoing maintenance costs of the buildings.
- Replacement of the aging Hall with purpose built accommodation for youth services would reduce the ongoing asset maintenance liability for the Council.
- The Federal and NSW Governments currently operate several grant programs which may contribute substantially towards provision of accommodation for youth services.

Strategy

1. To ensure the design brief for the renovation and / or retrofitting of any retained buildings and for any new building specifies that the costs of all renovation and/or building work is undertaken within the Council's available financial resources; that energy efficient measures are included in the design; and that renovations are designed to reduce life cycle costs.
2. To investigate accommodation for youth services which will minimise the capital and ongoing maintenance costs for the Council.

Objective 5

To allow for the granting of leases, licences or other estates that reflect community aspirations for this land; are consistent with this Plan of Management; and accord with the Local Government Act 1993

Issues

- Leases or licenses or other interest in community land must be granted in accordance with Section 46 and Section 47 of the Local Government Act 1993, and within the provisions of the adopted Plan of Management for the land.
- The management of the land and facilities for best community benefit may involve leasing or licensing the use of the land or building for sole or shared use by an organisation or community body such as Mid Mountains Youth Centre.
- The Council has limited financial resources to fund construction and maintenance of community buildings.

Opportunities

- Leases or licenses formalise the use of community land by groups or organisations providing facilities and services for community benefit.
- The Council needs to identify alternative funding sources to meet the demand for community buildings and to recognise and take advantage of the potential for cost recovery from user groups, particularly for services that come under the auspices of State or Federal Government agencies.

Strategy

- Ensure all dealings with the community land and the buildings on the land are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 and the provisions of this Plan of Management.

PART 5 MANAGEMENT PURPOSE

This part outlines the intentions for the future management and use of the land and buildings covered by this Plan.

5.1 RFS Building

The Lawson Rural Fire Service Headquarters will continue on the land for the short to medium term. The Council and NSW Government plan to provide a purpose built station elsewhere in Lawson within 4 years and it is proposed that the RFS will vacate the building at that time.

Investigations are to be undertaken regarding the reuse of this building for delivery of youth or other community services. Subject to the findings of these investigations and sufficient resources being made available it is intended for the RFS Building to be adapted for use by youth services and/ or other community uses.

Should retention of the RFS Building be found to be unviable this Plan allows for demolition of the RFS Building.

5.2 Community Hall

The Community Hall has been closed to use since 2004. Subject to appropriate development consents the Hall is intended to be demolished and the vacant land used for parking associated with use of the existing RFS Building and/or redeveloped for youth services and/or other community uses in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 and Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2005 (LEP 2005).

5.3 Future Use of the Land

Subject to investigations and adequate resources being made available, the Council may decide to construct another community building or buildings on the land. This building/s may accommodate youth services and/or other community uses as determined by the Council in response to community aspirations and identified need. Any new building should also be consistent with this Plan of Management and in accord with the requirements of relevant legislation and policies of the Council.

The provisions of Precinct VH-LA03- Village Housing Precinct set out development standards, objectives and policies applicable to the land under LEP 2005. Any new development on the land must address the precinct vision statement; precinct objectives; building envelope including building height, setback, site coverage; design consideration; and amenity and safety.

5.4 Lease or license of the Land

This Plan allows for the granting of leases, licences or other estates that reflect community aspirations for this land; are consistent with this Plan of Management; and are in accord with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993.

PART 6 PERFORMANCE TARGETS, MEANS TO ACHIEVE TARGETS AND ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

Objective 1: To ensure the buildings on the land are appropriate for their intended use

Strategy	Performance Target	Means of Achievement	Evaluation
1. To demolish Lawson Community Hall in a safe and timely manner	Demolition coordinated with RTA works for Highway widening	Seek development approval to demolish Hall; and coordinate demolition with RTA works on front of the Hall	Building demolished in accordance with conditions of development approval and the site left safe.
2. Relocate Lawson Rural Fire Service to an appropriate building elsewhere in Lawson	RFS relocated within 2 years of completion of Highway widening	Alternative site obtained within financial capacity of the Council; RFS building constructed with funding from NSW Government	RFS operates from a purpose built facility elsewhere in Lawson
3. To investigate opportunities to provide better facilities for the young people of the Mid Mountains on this site or elsewhere in Lawson	Mid mountains Youth Services operate from accommodation that meets their operational and program needs	Seek temporary accommodation for MM Youth Centre and other appropriate city wide services in need; Modify existing RFS building and/or build new facility on site for Youth Services	Mid Mountains youth have continuing provision of services delivered locally
4. To investigate opportunities for co-location of city wide and local youth services either on this site or elsewhere within Lawson.	City wide and Mid Mountains Youth Services have affordable accommodation within Lawson that meets their operational and program needs	Review the Mid Mountains Community Facilities Study and detail requirements for youth services Seek capital and ongoing operational funding from the Council and external sources	Citywide youth services are centralised in Lawson
5. Subject to outcomes of Strategies 3 and 4, review requirements for this land and consider possible reclassification and sale of the land and best use of the funds for youth facilities in Lawson	The land asset continues to be used for best community benefit	The land remains Community Land OR Funds raised from the land are used for benefit of youth elsewhere in Lawson	Youth services and community meeting space is available in retained / renovated/ new building/s either on site or these resources are used to provide this elsewhere in Lawson.

Objective 2: To recognise and honour the heritage significance of the land

Strategy	Performance Target	Means of Achievement	Evaluation
A heritage interpretive plan is prepared and implemented for the site in consultation with community	Heritage recognition is undertaken in a co-ordinated and consultative manner	Heritage interpretive plan is prepared and implemented as part of recognition of the significance of the Hall	Implementation of the heritage and interpretive strategy is completed
Dismantling of the façade ensures that heritage bricks are protected and available for reuse	Bricks used in façade are available for reuse	Investigate location of heritage bricks and protect these in the dismantling of the portico and façade	Significant proportion of bricks saved and appropriately stored for reuse
Heritage interpretation includes potential for reuse of bricks from the Hall	Recovered bricks are used in heritage interpretation of the site	Reuse of bricks is considered in the design of new work in public spaces of Lawson and on the site	Bricks feature in heritage interpretation of site and buildings
Ensure that community meeting space is included in building/s on site or that funds from sale of the land are used to provide it elsewhere within Lawson	The land asset continues its association with the Lawson community	The land remains Community Land OR funds raised from the land are used for community benefit elsewhere in Lawson	Community meeting space is available in retained / renovated/ new building/s either on site or funds from sale of the land are used to provide this elsewhere in Lawson
A detailed survey, photographic record and oral history of the Mechanics Institute is undertaken	Archival records of the site and the Hall are undertaken and available for research and reference for posterity	Heritage documentation is undertaken prior to demolition of the Hall	Survey of the Hall, photographic records and oral history are lodged in the Council's Local Studies Collection.
Signage, markers and a physical memorial to the heritage of the Hall are provided	Physical Heritage interpretation of land is provided	Heritage interpretive plan is prepared and implemented in conjunction with the dismantling of the Hall	Signage, marker and memorial are in place

Objective 3: To ensure the site provides an attractive streetscape entry to Lawson Town Centre.

Strategy	Performance Target	Means of Achievement	Evaluation
Retained/ new building/s and landscaping incorporate good design	Attractive and visually striking presentation of the site to the Great Western Highway	Design of street frontage is integrated with that of Bellevue Park and Lawson Town Centre and in accordance with LEP 2005	The site continues to contribute positively to the entry to Lawson Town Centre

Objective 4: To ensure that development and use of the buildings on the site are within the financial resources available to the Council.

Strategy	Performance Target	Means of Achievement	Evaluation
Costs to redevelop and maintain assets are sustainable within resources available to the Council and community	Modification of building for Youth Centre is within the Council's financial capacity	Full life cycle costs are considered Costs are passed on to users where reasonable Necessary funding allocations are considered in the Council's Financial Strategy preparation of the Management Plan and Budget	Costs for redevelopment of site comes within resources available Ongoing operation costs come within resources available
Retained buildings and new buildings on the land have low ongoing costs	Maintenance and operational costs are reduced	Energy and water efficient design principles are incorporated into design	Energy and maintenance costs of buildings reduced compared to those of existing buildings.

Objective 5: To allow for the granting of leases, licences or other estates that reflect community aspirations for this land; are consistent with this Plan of Management and are in accord with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993

Strategy	Performance Target	Means of Achievement	Evaluation
Uses that involve lease, license or other estates on the buildings or land are considered in order to maximise community benefits from community assets and resources	Any lease or license over the land or facilities on the land is granted in accordance with the provisions of this Plan of Management, relevant legislation and Council policies	Use of buildings is determined in accordance with Local Government Act 1993, Council policy and this Plan of Management	Public knowledge and general agreement with leases, licenses or estates over the land or facilities

APPENDIX 1 A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

(Extract: pages 15-16 *Lawson Mechanics Institute Hall Heritage Assessment 2004 Prepared by Noel Bell Ridley Sni6th & Architects Pty Limited*)

LAWSON LITERARY & DEBATING SOCIETY 1896 -1902

In **1896** -The Lawson Mechanics Institute was founded as a local literary group.

In **1899** - In February, Lot 17 of Section 1 of the Village of Lawson was set aside by the State Government under the School of Arts Act and dedicated as the site for a Mechanic's Institute.

In **1899** - A temporary timber building was erected on the site by the Lawson Literary Society.

LAWSON MECHANICS INSTITUTE 1903 - 1911

1903 - A more substantial masonry building was erected on the site in at a cost of Four Hundred Pounds. Bricks for the building were re-used from the earlier Lawson Railway Station platform. Architect, Mr A. Stephens, Builder, Mr W.J. Knight

The new building was opened **18th December 1903** by Mr T.R. Smith MLA.

In **1906** a new caretaker's room and dressing room were added at the rear of the hall.

In **1907** the new Blue Mountain's Shire Council took over the building temporarily.

In **1909** the stage was enlarged and wings were added and moving pictures were first exhibited at the hall by a travelling show.

In **1911** the name of the Institution was changed to the Lawson Literary Institute.

LAWSON LITERARY INSTITUTE 1911 – 1991

In **1912** Skating was adopted as a regular activity at the hall.

In **1914** Acetylene Gas lighting was installed replacing oil lamps.

In **1931** Electricity was laid on to the hall.

In **1932** the community sought assistance for the running and maintenance of the hall from the Shire Council but received a loan instead to renovate the facilities.

In **1939** an office was added to the building.

In **1958** the trusteeship of the site was transferred to the City of the Blue Mountains with a provision for the resumption of land for Road Widening and a stipulation for ownership reverting to the Crown on the cessation of the terms of the original grant.

In **1989** the frontage was resumed by the Department of Main Roads (RTA) for the widening of the Great Western Highway.

COMMUNITY CENTRE / MID MOUNTAINS YOUTH CENTRE 1991 – 2004

In **1990** the place was modified and became known as the Mid Mountains Youth Centre.

In **1991** a new Community Centre was erected elsewhere in Lawson with the proceeds from the sale of the land to the RTA.

In **1992** a proposal to demolish the front half of the building and reconstruct a matching façade on the truncated building was proposed.

In **1994** further concerns regarding the future of the place were confirmed when a timeframe of 10 years was given by the RTA for the proposed road widening programme.

In **2002** the Mechanics institute Hall was identified as having Local heritage significance in the Blue Mountains Heritage Study.

In **2003** a building assessment report was commissioned by the Council to determine feasibility for options for the Community Centre.

In **2004** finalisation of the reports and plans for the proposed road widening requires a definite decision on options for the future of the site must be made prior to November.

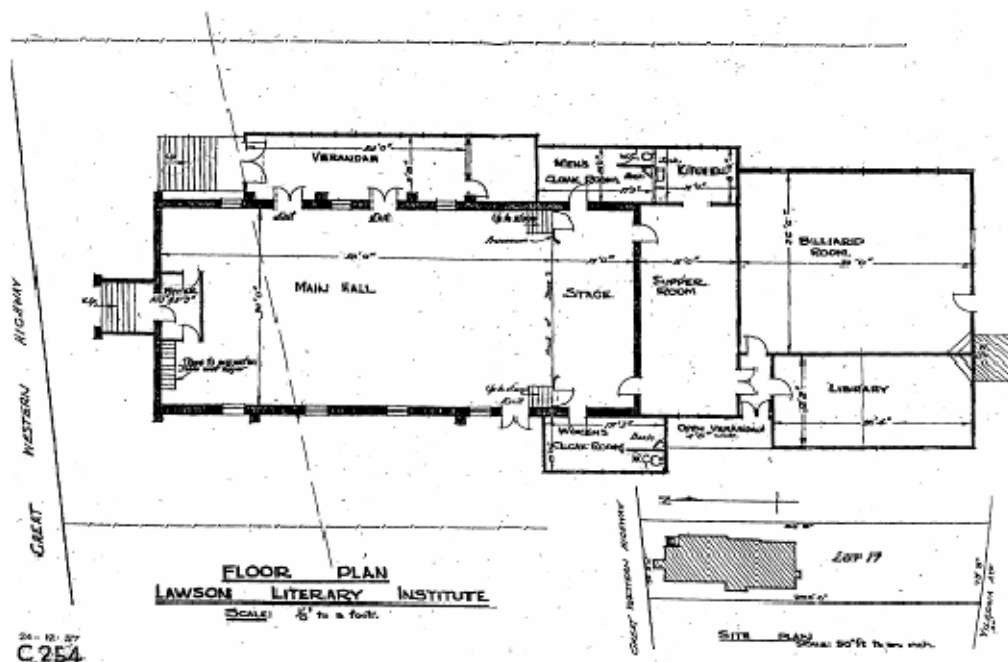


Figure 6: Plan of the Lawson Literary Institute 1957

The present layout remains substantially unchanged from that shown in this plan. The dotted line shows the approximate location of the road resumption.

APPENDIX 2 OPTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

The Local Government Act requires that a Plan of Management examine different options for management of the site and identify the preferred option. The options examined in development of this Plan of Management are outlined below together with estimated costs.

Option 1: the adopted option with an estimated cost to the Council of \$670,000

- Build a new station alongside the Fire Brigade and Police Station on land owned currently by the RTA and located on the corner of Henry St and the Great Western Highway in Lawson. Estimated cost: \$350,000 for the land (and \$400,000 for the Building to be funded by NSW Government).
- Document the Hall and provide heritage interpretation on site and/or elsewhere in Lawson. Estimated cost: \$50,000.
- Demolish the Hall at no cost to the Council.
- Upgrade the RFS to accommodate the Mid Mountains Youth Centre and other Youth Services. Estimated cost: \$270,000 for Youth Centre. No estimates are currently available for other youth services accommodation.
- Youth Centre in rental accommodation (Uniting Church or alternative) for 4years or so.

Option 2: with an estimated cost to the Council of \$1,075,000 to \$1,400,000

- Retain and upgrade the Hall to provide a licensed public hall to seat 90 people, and to accommodate the Mid Mountains Youth Centre. Estimated cost: \$675,000 to \$1 million.
- Lease the adjoining land for temporary parking until RFS move out.
- Demolish the RFS Building in 2010 and seal the area to provide parking for the Hall. Estimated cost: \$50,000.
- Build a new station alongside the Fire Brigade and Police Station on land owned currently by the RTA and located the corner of Henry St and the Great Western Highway in Lawson. Estimated cost: \$350,000 for the land (and \$400,000 for the Building to be funded by NSW Government).
- N.B. This option does not renew the Hall building fabric in any way to reduce maintenance costs or provide additional accommodation for other youth services.

Option 3: with an estimated cost of \$800,000

- Replace the façade to the Hall and make the building safe to accommodate the Mid Mountains Youth Centre as is. This would be a temporary measure to retain the Hall and further modification would be necessary in the near future to bring the building closer to modern standards. Estimated cost: \$350,000 plus high ongoing maintenance costs.
- Lease the adjoining land for temporary parking until RFS move out. Estimated cost not available.

- Demolish the RFS Building in 2010 and seal the area to provide parking for the Hall. Estimated cost \$100,000.
- Build a new station alongside the Fire Brigade and Police Station on land owned currently by the RTA and located the corner of Henry St and the Great Western Highway in Lawson. Estimated cost: \$350,000 for the land (and \$400,000 for the Building to be funded by NSW Government).
- N.B. This option does not renew the Hall building fabric in any way to reduce maintenance costs, provide for disabled access, upgrade to meet needs of the youth centre or provide additional accommodation for other youth services.

Option 4: with an estimated cost of \$1,205,000

- Document the Hall and provide heritage interpretation elsewhere in Lawson. Estimated cost \$50,000.
- Demolish the Hall at no cost to the Council.
- Lease accommodation for the Youth Centre. Estimated cost not available.
- Build a new station alongside the Fire Brigade and Police Station on land owned currently by the RTA and located the corner of Henry St and the Great Western Highway in Lawson. Estimated cost: \$350,000 for the land (and \$400,000 for the Building to be funded by NSW Government).
- Demolish the RFS Building in 2010 at an estimated cost: \$50,000.
- Reclassify the site to operational land at an estimated cost \$5,000
- Sell the site with the proceeds funding provision for general community use elsewhere in Lawson with an estimated income of \$400,000
- Build a new Youth Services Centre including a Mid Mountains Youth Centre elsewhere in Lawson. Estimated cost: \$350,000 for land and broad estimate of \$1 million for building.

In summary:

- This Plan adopts Option 1 as the most viable social and economic option. Option 1 presents flexibility to provide an upgraded Mid Mountains Youth Centre in time and, pending further investigation of the needs and opportunities, a city wide youth services centre.
- A gap to be filled in all options is provision of interim accommodation for the Mid Mountains Youth Centre. However this is more critical for options 1 and 4. The Council budget would need to allocate funding for rental payments in the interim.
- Options 2 and 3 retain the truncated Hall and would have high social and heritage value. However they also require significantly higher capital and ongoing maintenance investment than option 1.
- All options have the flexibility for staged development of accommodation for city wide youth services, however Option 4 involves this investment upfront.